



HUNTERVILLE VETERINARY CLUB

NEWSLETTER—MARCH 2013



Dry Conditions Continue

Things are now becoming fairly challenging on many farms out there. While stock, especially sheep, have been holding on pretty well for some time now, things will not continue like this as feed covers diminish further. This newsletter focuses on some of the management practices that need to be considered in conditions such as these.



Tail End Ewes

A tail end will be developing in many ewe flocks (don't fool yourselves). Repeated trials have demonstrated that focusing on holding or improving the condition of these ewes will give you the biggest 'bang for your buck' long term in areas such as scanning, lambing percentage and lamb growth rates next season. Identify under-performing stock, drench them and at least remove the competitive pressure, even if you struggle to actually feed them better.

Note: The performance of ewes spread out as much as possible and set stocked is most likely to be maximised. Rotations and shuffle grazing will put extra pressure on ewes. Once pastures begin to freshen, ewes can begin to be mobbed up to build up covers again. Most farmers now have few options other than this.

Early Weaning

Weaning cows now can be a great option especially if you have a little suitable weaner feed available (including baylage, meal or crops) and yard weaning is practical.

Also consider early pregnancy testing to identify empty cows and late calvers. Weaned cows can then be spread out to pick at what is available.

Eczema Update

Counts remain very low!! The eczema threat reduces as every day passes!! Warm, moist weather could still cause problems however in bad eczema years we have generally seen spore counts start to rise by now.

Nitrogen

Sometimes even in a bad season you have to spend money to make money!!! At least establish if the application of nitrogen when it does rain, could be cost effective for you. It will certainly:

- Accelerate your ability to grow feed for weaner cattle and even cows or older cattle.
- Improve feed covers going into winter allowing you to carry more stock, which every one seems to agree will be worth a lot more once it has rained, demand for stock improves and the works are not full!
- Get some weight back onto stock that have lost too much condition through the dry.

Look after your rams

Rams have to eat too, ensure you focus on maintaining their condition right up to and during mating. Rams losing condition before mating will not be as fertile and active and cover less ewes. (If you use ram lambs the risk can be even greater.)

If feed conditions mean ewes have to be mated while set stocked, ensure you have rams in **all the paddocks**. This means closing the gates. I have seen plenty of cases where problems with dry ewes have been traced back to the rams ending up being unevenly distributed as a result of an open gate policy.



After Hours Vet

Emergencies: Phone 06 3228 058 

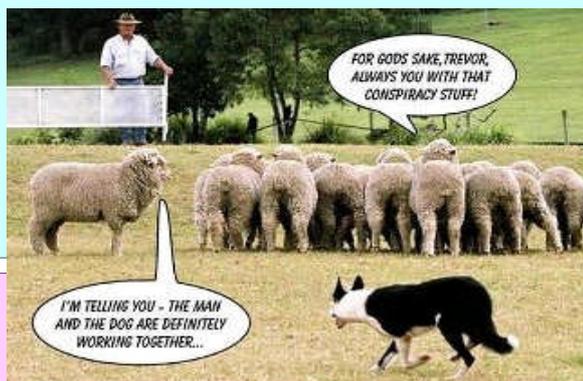
Shop Hours: 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Email: huntervillevetclub@xtra.co.nz

Website: www.huntervillevetclub.co.nz

Watch Out For Worms After It Rains

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, worm challenges have been fairly low through this dry period. Significant worm challenges can be expected once it rains. Targeted drenching may well be required on many farms at this time. Contact the Clinic for advice.



Caution—worm challenge, especially Barbers Pole, could occur at any time for lambs grazing in shadey country with damp areas. Be very careful before you extend the drench intervals in your lamb drenching programme.

It Could Be Worse

I recently attended the world sheep vets conference in Rotorua. I came away thinking NZ still wasn't a bad place to be a sheep farmer!!

- Blue Tongue and Schmallenberg Virus have been very serious diseases for the sheep farmers of the UK and Europe.
- In many countries drench resistance is significantly more advanced than in NZ (although a lot of the countries are only just working out how bad).
- Politicians and the public place massive obstacles of all descriptions in front of farmers.

Knock Out Drenching

We have discussed this in previous newsletters. At the conference, papers were given on the potential of knock out drenching programmes to slow drench resistance development.

Essentially knock out drenching involves using one of the new families of drenches (Startect or Zolvix) to remove any worms in lambs or ewes that may have survived through earlier drenches. If these worms are not removed they will continue to produce eggs and increase the percentage of resistant genotypes in the worm population.

Computer modelling would appear to support the theory that knock out drenching can slow resistance development quite significantly especially on properties where worm populations are low to moderate.

Autumn is the best time of the year to consider this practice. Contact the Clinic if you would like to discuss knock out drenching further.

Beware of Liver Fluke

On most farms, every wet area is being grazed this year!! These wet areas are where liver fluke infections will be picked up. If you have historically had problems with liver fluke or have had reports of liver fluke on kill sheets, checking the liver fluke status of your ewe flock in particular would be a wise precaution. Faecal samples can be collected to check for the presence of fluke eggs.

Hunterville Rugby Football Club Fat Lamb Competition Results Summary

Heaviest Average Weight—	1st 29kg Richard & Mary Lourie 2nd 25.6kg Shane & Debbie Hurley
Highest Yielding Lambs—	1st 49.2% Gavin Guiniven 2nd 49.2% Richard & Mary Lourie
Most Even Lambs—	1st within 400g Alex & Jo McAlley 2nd within 400g Greg & Rachel Shannon
Most Lucrative Lambs—	1st \$4.70/kg = \$97.45 ave G & E Vickers 2nd \$4.70/kg=\$93.38 ave A & J McAlley
Best Maternal Lambs—	1st Alan & Clare Bruce 2nd Andrew & Jo Duncan
Best Terminal Lambs—	1st Alex & Jo McAlley 2nd George & Emily Vickers
Best Grading Lambs—	1st Barry Lennox 2nd Greg & Rachel Shannon

Congratulations to the winners.

Dry Cow Residues

Some dairy farmers have experienced problems around calving with residues to the long acting dry cow therapies, when withholding times have been complied with.

It appears that this issue is most likely to arise when:

- Whole herd dry cow treatment is carried out.
- Importantly, cows are dried off that have been doing very low production (less than 5 litres per day).

If you would like to discuss this further please contact the Clinic.